

THE LAST OF THE YUKIAHS.

At the time of the Spanish conquest of California, the Indian population of the territory was known to be very large. In Northern California alone it is estimated that over fifty thousand aborigines roamed in undisturbed security all over this fertile land. With the advent of the conquerors the Indians began to decline in numbers, owing to the cruel treatment of the Spaniards, and the introduction of hitherto unknown diseases, which were very fatal to them, so that when the State came into the possession of the Americans not one-half as many Indians remained in the country as existed a century before.

The destruction of the tribes progressed more rapidly even under American domination than under the Spaniards. The fatal vice of drink became more general among them, and they succumbed to the new civilization. When the settlers of the country discovered how well the northern half of the State was adapted for stock raising, they appropriated the lands of the helpless Indians, and drove them back into regions less fertile. The Indians resented this hardship by killing the white man's cattle, and then vengeance, cruel, swift and strong, was visited upon the inferior race, and a war of extermination was waged. Thousands of Indians were cruelly massacred, and the war ended when there were no more to kill.

Sonoma County, one of the most fertile in the State, the present home of a most prosperous and thrifty people, carefully suppresses in its annals all mention of the early treatment of the Indians by its pioneer founders. Its groves were shambles where the Indians were tortured by fire and exterminated by the sword.

Certainly no more worthless types of humanity ever existed than the Cali-

fornia savages. They were only a step in advance of the Australian in intelligence, and were not the equal of that lowest type of humanity in the ingenuity of their devices for trapping game.

The original California Indian was an abject and bestial object. Neither male nor female was clothed, except in extreme weather, when their nakedness was protected in some degree by hides and skins. They ate the most repulsive reptiles, snakes, lizards and worms. Roasted grasshoppers were a delicacy only matched by a dish of tainted fish. They derived their name of "diggers" from the custom of digging into the ground for roots or game. Their sole object in living was to exist with as little trouble to themselves as possible, and they were so lazy that the laziest white man who ever breathed was a monument of industry in comparison.

There still lives the remnant of this once numerous tribe at Hopland, Sonoma County, California. Only two or three hundred are left. There has been secured to them a tract of worthless land, upon which they have settled, and where they make a feeble pretense of raising vegetables and fruits. They own a little stock, and are (called) civilized.

The Church, out of her large charity, has sent them a missionary who has taught them agriculture, and has labored unceasingly to improve their condition and morals. They have a school where the youth are taught the rudiments of education, and instruction is given them in the common utilitarian arts. The women make good seamstresses and fair cooks, and both sexes, when in the chapel, are exceedingly devout. Some of the more ambitious have frame houses, but many prefer homes after the picturesque style of their forefathers, formed of saplings